



News Release

For immediate release: August 31, 2009

(09-138)

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Immunization rates in Washington increase slightly

Rates show Washington is moving in the right direction

OLYMPIA — After dipping last year, childhood immunization rates in Washington have increased slightly according to the latest National Immunization Survey. These rates show that Washington is making gains and has picked up momentum in the right direction.

“Childhood immunizations are the best way to prevent many diseases, some of which have no cure or treatment,” said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “We’re making progress, and we’ve got more work to do. So, we’ll continue the important work and immunization activities that have helped us improve our rates.”

The 2008 National Immunization Survey shows that 73.5 percent of Washington children 19–35 months old have a complete vaccination series — up from 69 percent in 2007. Washington’s rate remains behind the national average of 76 percent and behind the state and national goal of 80 percent coverage for the vaccination series. The series consists of six vaccines, some requiring multiple doses. A child must have all the doses to be included in the series rate.

Rates also increased for the series with seven vaccines, from 64.6 percent in 2007 to 67.3 percent in 2008. This gain puts Washington just one point below the national average for this series. The progress is encouraging, and serves as a springboard to meeting the state and national goals for both series.

The state continues to promote the importance of ensuring that children are fully immunized on time for the best protection; missing or delaying even one vaccine leaves children at risk for disease. We continue to give health care providers tools, such as the CHILD Profile Immunization Registry, to improve immunization services. We also continue to work closely with providers, health insurers, local health, and partners to make sure children have access to vaccines as we face changes to the Universal Childhood Vaccine program.

— More —

As flu season approaches with the added threat of H1N1 (swine flu) outbreaks, it is more important than ever to make sure your children are protected against disease. There have been outbreaks of mumps, chickenpox, and whooping cough in Washington so far this year.

“These are serious diseases that affect everyone,” Selecky said. “Recent outbreaks and the emergence of new viruses remind us of the importance of making sure kids are fully immunized.”

The Department of Health provides all childhood vaccines, except the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, at no cost to health care providers to give to children under age 19. The agency does purchase the HPV vaccine for low-income children under age 19.

Parents are urged to use their regular health care providers for childhood immunizations. For help finding a health care provider or an immunization clinic, call the [local health agency](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) in your area or the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

More information on childhood immunizations is available on the Department of Health [Immunization Program Web site](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/) (www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/); [CHILD Profile](http://www.childprofile.org) (www.childprofile.org) is also available online. Information on [changes to the Universal Childhood Vaccine program](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/providers/universal.htm) is available online (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/providers/universal.htm>). The [National Immunization Survey](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/stats-surv/imz-coverage.htm) (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/stats-surv/imz-coverage.htm>) is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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